

Childhood Education

*Probing Ideas and
Improving Practices*

APR 9 1960

Grouping

April 1960



Journal of the Association for Childhood Education International

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For Those
Concerned with
Children 2-12

To Stimulate Thinking
Rather Than Advocate
Fixed Practices

1959-60

Probing Ideas and
Improving Practices

Childhood Education

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Volume 36

Number 8

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Courtesy, Evelyn Bird, Atlanta

"I can do it."

By HAROLD G. SHANE

We Can Find

Better Ways of Grouping Children!

EVER SINCE THE 19TH CENTURY, WHEN THE GRADED ELEMENTARY school became common in American education, classroom teachers have been vexed by the problem of ways of grouping children with distinctly different environments and with widely varied human endowments. The fact that the discussion has persisted for generations, plus the fact that dozens of grouping plans have been introduced, dropped, rediscovered and modified suggests that some fundamentally new approaches may be needed.

At the root of the difficulty in "adjusting the school to the child" lies the fact that even with such devices as grouping on the basis of purported ability (as in primary reading or in XYZ type groups) we at best *reduce* rather than *eliminate* the human differences in a given section or class. On top of that, in many grouping plans or schemes there is the incongruity of attempting to reduce by artificial or mechanical means the human individuality which in the next breath we declare must be prized in American democracy.

Perhaps we can begin to terminate our groping search for better means of grouping by acknowledging that in a very real sense there are no clearly delineated ability groups into which children in a given grade can be divided. Then let us go on to recognize that children are spread over a spectrum, a "developmental growth continuum," with each individual occupying a uniquely personal place in the total learning environment and being possessed of experiences, motives and interests which cannot arbitrarily be amalgamated into conventional groups.

But how then do we cope with individual differences once they are admitted to be too personalized for conventional grouping plans? A part of the answer at least resides in giving real heed to this year's theme for CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: the probing of ideas to improve practices.

As a start let us *study, adapt and apply* some of the fresh concepts and ideas in this issue of our journal for individualizing instruction by artful teaching—creative teaching—rather than cling to the hope that a formula can be developed to eradicate differences among children.

Perhaps a partial solution to the grouping problem can be found in introducing more kindergartens for four-year-olds and considering the fourth and fifth year as an ungraded period of school living for all boys and girls. Let the most mature and older ones—five per cent perhaps—spend but one year in this group, and arrange for the slow-developing children—perhaps ten per cent—to stay for three years of ungraded kindergarten experience. This would be giving children at both extremes of the ability range a more even start in grade one.

It is through innovations such as this, through trying out new, developmentally sound ideas, that we will eventually find the professional answers which have often eluded us in the quest for means to individualized teaching and learning.

Harold G. Shane is dean of the School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Grouping for Continuous Learning

Robert Clausen, associate professor of education, New York University, gives a basis for probing today's practices in school and classroom grouping. Are practices built on sound educational principles? Are emphases on what and how children learn? Should children be fitted into traditional grades, a "convenient administrative organization?"

John M. Bahner, principal of Englewood Public School, Englewood, Florida, tells why and how their school broke away from the traditional way of grouping. He sees the combination-grade classroom and team-teaching techniques as steps toward the ungraded concept.

Why Probe Grouping Practices?

By ROBERT CLAUSEN

THOSE INVOLVED IN WORKING WITH children are constantly faced with the problem of looking at grouping practices in relation to the basic principles on which a sound program of education is built. A look at current school organizations, however, leads one to wonder about the consistency existing within grouping practices in many schools. Emphasis is being directed toward heterogeneous grouping within school systems. Study in the area of the ungraded school has begun to appear more frequently in literature. The concern about grouping within a school has grown from increased knowledge about the nature of present society and the vast knowledge available about how children grow and learn.

What, then, constitutes possible inconsistency? Briefly, it might be stated in this manner. Placing a child in a heterogeneous class group is done be-

cause it is honestly believed that he can best achieve desired learnings in this environment. The emphasis is on *what and how the child learns*. When he arrives in this classroom, however, it is typical to find him placed in one or more ability groups, segregating him into a group in which he has been matched with some of his peers according to criteria predetermined as valid in classifying children. This decision, too, should be based on a concern for what and how the child learns. We see at one level belief that present-day society demands the kinds of learnings that can only take place in a richly diverse environment in which differences in people are respected as precious commodities and form the basis of much positive learning. At the classroom level the actual learning takes place in the protected and stigmatizing environment of ability groups. One might ask how sincere the belief about grouping is at the total school level.

We know how the child's perceptions of how he *must* function or how he *can* function emerge from what he learns about himself and his environment. For many children, finding themselves in a

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classroom group to which a label is attached makes for the channelling of their energies toward "reaching the next stratum." Certainly there is nothing wrong with ambition or the desire to achieve. Psychology would teach us, however, that pride in self and feelings of personal worth are essential to respect and acceptance of others. Classroom organization must afford every child the chance to feel satisfaction in himself at the same time it is encouraging him to broaden his horizons and add to his talents. How often children are heard to say:

Miss Miles, when will I be in the Blue Group?

Sarah is smarter than I am. She's in the first reading group.

Billy's not as smart as I am. He's in Group Three.

Does this make for the kind of positive self-concept people need if they are to meet the demands of a culture which requires them to live and work constructively with people of varying abilities and interests?

Looking at what children learn is not enough. Decisions about grouping must be seen in their proper place in a teaching-learning picture. All too often we begin with an organization which is convenient for the teacher to administer, and the task then becomes one of fitting children into the organization. This would seem to be clearly a case of "putting the cart before the horse." *Organizing for work is not the only consideration: first there is determination of desired outcomes, then organization for work. This is the sequence for achievement.* Only when these are clear and can be supported by knowledge of children and their culture can a look be taken at what kinds of group experiences children will need to have.

Specifically, what can children learn from the groups in which they find them-

selves in a classroom? They may learn

... that *everyone* has something to contribute to an ongoing project of the group,

... that they are *needed* by their peers,

... that every learner is also a teacher and that people *learn from each other*,

... that the *teacher* respects the talents of everyone in the class.

These are important things for children to learn. However, it is also *possible* for them to learn

... that the things they are able to do don't carry the *prestige* that other talents do,

... that they have *two strikes against them* whenever they are faced with a new learning task,

... that their goal is to keep up with others no matter how difficult or impossible it is,

... that they are *second-class* citizens,

... that they are *first-class* citizens,

... that people are segregated by virtue of a few skills which they bring with them to each new classroom.

The above ideas, in addition to many more, form the basis today of investigations about classroom grouping. The intent of this article is to pinpoint the need to look at the very foundations of our educational endeavor. Perhaps the following questions would serve as a partial guide for each of us as we look at what we now do:

Is there *consistency* between school grouping and classroom grouping practices in terms of what we hope children are learning and what we think we believe about how learning takes place?

Does the grouping procedure in each classroom *promote* the social goals essential in the world scene of 1960?

Are decisions reached not on the basis of administrative convenience but on the basis of our *growing* knowledge of people?

Do we honestly know what the perceptions of children are in our classrooms in relation to how society feels about them?

It is hoped that we all are constantly taking a probing look at what we are teaching in our classrooms by virtue of how we afford children chances to work together.

(Continued on next page)

Grouping Within a School

By JOHN M. BAHNER

MARY WAS THE BRIGHTEST GIRL IN THE classroom. A few desks away sat Johnny, the slowest in the class. These two children were almost as different as day and night, yet there were also thirty other unique individuals in the classroom and only one teacher. Furthermore, every teacher in Englewood School was faced with the same problem. As individual teachers they had already adjusted their methods of teaching in an attempt to provide for these differences in children; but, if every teacher had the same problem, perhaps some school-wide solutions should be attempted.

Throughout their experience, these teachers observed that the individual children and groups of children had a range of academic abilities and attainments that extended over at least several years. Thus, they could state with firm conviction that a single grade designation could never adequately describe the achievement level of either a single class or a single child. It seemed obvious that some children were going to need a longer period of time than six years to achieve most of the goals of an elementary school program and, conversely, that others would be ready to profit from the next unit of school organization after only five years in the elementary school.

Heterogeneous Grouping in Combination Grades

These observations indicated a need for a type of organization that would enable all children, fast and slow, to move smoothly through the school at their own rate without either skipping or repeating. Both an ungraded structure and an increased use of combination grades were discussed. The school al-

ready had a combination second-third-grade room and a fifth-sixth-grade room. The two teachers who had these combination grades expressed satisfaction with them and reported only minor problems of parental understanding. Since none of the staff had the benefit of any experience in an ungraded system and since it was doubtful that such a plan could be presented adequately to the community before the end of the school year, it was decided to organize classes for the following year as follows:

Kindergarten—two sections (Financial conditions necessitated having only one teacher for the two sections.)

Grade 1, 1, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 3-4, 4-5, 5, 5-6, and 6

A line over a number indicates the section where the three or four most advanced children of a grade were placed; a line below a number indicates where the three or four most retarded children were placed.

This plan was followed to prevent a teacher from having to work with the extremely accelerated and the extremely retarded in the same classroom, yet heterogeneity is still retained—a condition which the staff felt was important. At the same time, placing the extremely advanced or retarded in specific rooms reduced the range in any given classroom to a point where a teacher with a combination class could see no difference in the range of abilities as observed the preceding year with a single grade level per classroom.

As the staff seized every opportunity to explain the reasons behind this type of organization through parent-teacher meetings, study groups and individual conferences, parents began thinking of children of a given age level as having a wide range of abilities. They realized that a child's reading ability is most apt not to be the same as his ability in arith-

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metic. For the most part, they accepted as perfectly natural that some children (not theirs, of course) need longer than six years to move through the elementary school program. Even for those who do not accept this, the various combination grades will probably obscure the movement of a child sufficiently so that only his parents will realize if he takes more than six years in Englewood School.

Johnny is a boy of low scholastic aptitude. All the evidence gathered during his two years of school indicates he will profit by having seven years in the elementary school. This year Johnny is in a 2-3 class. Next year he will be in a 3-4 class, the following year probably in a 4-5 class, and the year following perhaps in a straight fifth grade. Thus he will have taken three years to cover what is typically known as the third and fourth grades.

Of course, if Johnny's ability has been misjudged or if his growth pattern changes to a point where it no longer seems desirable to have him spend seven years in the elementary program, he could be placed in the sixth grade three years from now without any dislocation in his progress. In either event, there will be no social stigma attached to his decelerated rate of progress. There has been no boring repetition of a grade; he is making numerous friends among his somewhat younger classmates who are achieving at various levels along the learning continuum.

Through a similar use of the combination grades, an extremely mature, "gifted" child goes through a typical three- or four-year grade span in one less year and completes the elementary school program in five years. There is no skipping of any essential skills or being thrust suddenly into a group one year older chronologically.

Mary, who is in her fourth year of school beyond kindergarten, is an academically ad-

vanced child with high social and emotional maturity. This year she is in a 4-5 class and next year will be placed in a 5-6 class. At the end of next year she will probably be passed on to the junior high school, thereby completing the last three grades in a two-year period. If she does not live up to this expectation, she will be placed in a sixth grade at the end of next year.

Team Teaching

The graded structure of the elementary school was not the only tradition put under scrutiny by the Englewood School faculty. Another obstacle to better provision for individual differences seemed to lie in the traditional concept that a single teacher must work always with approximately thirty pupils. This seemed to be too restrictive. Therefore some of the faculty decided to plan and work closely together in teams of two or three teachers. During that same year in which the school planned having combination grades, one of the closely knit teams in operation involved a woman teacher with a third-fourth grade combination and a man with a fourth-fifth grade combination.

The typical day for this team began with a fifteen- or twenty-minute planning period during which each group discussed with its teacher the day's general plan and individual work. Reading groups then occupied the next hour and one-half. Each teacher had from two to four groups (this varied as the need arose throughout the year) composed of children with similar reading achievement levels from both rooms regardless of their grade placement.

Next came a short break for the morning fruit juice, followed by the physical education period when the two classes combined. The teachers planned this period together. Then one assumed responsibility for the total group while the other took a break, collected materials, evalu-

ated the work of pupils, or performed other needed tasks. After the physical education period, these sixty-five children remained together for a story period, music or art. The teacher who had the preceding half-hour away from the class assumed full responsibility now, while the other teacher had an unscheduled period of approximately twenty minutes.

From this point until lunch, the sixty-five children were divided into four arithmetic groups on the basis of achievement—again without regard to their grade placement. Each teacher worked with two groups.

The program after lunch varied considerably. Often there was some type of project going on, with the two classes sometimes combined and sometimes working separately. Special interests and abilities of the two teachers often determined just how the two classes operated. For example, both classes worked together on an electricity unit with the man assuming the major responsibility for planning the lesson, gathering the materials and doing the group instruction. The woman member of the team performed as an aide during this project, helping individuals and small groups. Later on, the teachers reversed their roles while undertaking a unit on space.

Although sometimes taught as separate entities, social studies, science, music and art were integrated during the afternoon period. Of course, individual work going on during reading groups was often based on the units or projects then in progress.

Modifying Traditional Practices To Fit Beliefs

The variations of team teaching being practiced at Englewood School are too numerous to describe in this article. However, these descriptions are not so important as the fact that this staff has shown that professionally-trained teachers, given freedom to develop improved educational practices, rise to the occasion and modify traditional practices in line with their educational beliefs.

Further faculty effort undoubtedly will modify present innovations in grade organization and teacher utilization. The traditional grade structure is fast being replaced by the ungraded concept. New insights into team-teaching techniques are emerging. The Englewood faculty is pleased to join company with other groups who are seriously questioning long-established practices of grouping children within a school.

THUS A CHILD LEARNS: BY WIGGLING SKILLS THROUGH HIS FINGERS AND TOES INTO himself, by soaking up habits and attitudes of those around him, by pushing and pulling his own world.

Thus a child learns: more through trial than error, more through pleasure than pain, more through experience than suggestion, more through suggestion than direction.

Thus a child learns: through affection, through love, through patience, through understanding, through belonging, through doing, through being.

Day by day the child comes to know a little bit of what you know, to think a little bit of what you think, to understand your understanding. That which you dream and believe and are, in truth, becomes the child.

As you perceive dully or clearly, as you think fuzzily or sharply, as you believe foolishly or wisely, as you dream drably or goldenly, as you are unworthy or sincere—thus a child learns.—FRED MOFFITT.

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What Does

By MAXINE MANN

Ability Grouping Do

to the Self-Concept?

"I am in the low fift Grade I am to dom."

"I happened to be a little smarter than the rest."

These quotations are from answers given by two fifth-grade pupils when asked, "How do you happen to be in this fifth-grade group?"

Do these self-reports give any indication of ways in which these children see themselves? Does the fact that these children have spent most of their five school years under ability grouping have anything to do with the self-concepts—"myself as I see me"—that they are reflecting?

Recurring Interest in Ability Grouping

During the twenties and thirties the literature contained many references to homogeneous or ability grouping. In the following years interest in the subject seemed to decrease. Perhaps it was felt that the problem had been satisfactorily solved. In the two years since the first Sputnik, with the subsequent re-evaluation of American education, the grouping question has been raised again. It is repeatedly suggested that perhaps ability grouping might be the answer to the problem of improving our educational program. The philosophy involved in ability grouping is not without some merit. It is one attempt to meet the problem of individual differences. However,

the emphasis seems to be primarily on differences in potential for academic achievement. Seldom is the question raised as to possible emotional impact on the child in this type of school organization. One finds such comments as, "Teachers observed that the . . . groups were exceedingly happy." This might indicate some subjective evaluation, but there is no evidence of objective data to support such observations.

Is ability grouping good in the way children look at themselves? Is it good in the way teachers look at children? Combs refers to Raimy's original definition of the self-concept in 1943 as, "the more or less organized perceptual object resulting from present and past self observation . . . (it is) what a person believes about himself."² Combs then goes on to say, ". . . the individual himself infers from his experiences who he is and what he is. He perceives of himself as . . . liked or unliked, acceptable or unacceptable, able or unable, depending upon his experiences with the world about him, but most particularly from how people who inhabit that world treat him. All these perceptions contribute to his perception of himself, to his phenomenal self."³

(Continued on next page)

¹ J. Murray Lee and Dorris M. Lee, *The Child and His Development* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1958), p. 26.

² Arthur W. Combs and Donald Snygg, *Individual Behavior* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 127.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

Combs and Soper point out the confusion in terminology that has arisen around this comparatively new theory, the self-concept. One such case is the error of using "self-concept" and "self-report" synonymously. The term, "self-report"—what the individual *says* he is—is not a synonym for "self-concept" but may be valuable as a means of exploring the self-concept.⁴

Description of Group

In a limited study among a group of 102 fifth-grade children, this writer attempted to obtain some self-reports which might offer clues to self-concepts. These children were classified into four ability groups upon entrance to first grade. Grouping at that time was based upon results of group intelligence tests and reading readiness tests. Labeled only by the teachers' names, groups are referred to in informal teacher conversations as "the highest group," "the lowest group," "second high," "second low." For the purposes of this study they will be referred to as Sections One, Two, Three and Four in descending order of estimated ability. Thirty children responded in Section One, twenty-nine in Section Two, twenty-five in Section Three, and eighteen in Section Four.

Method of This Study

A group questionnaire adapted from a study made by Keliher was used to obtain information as to how children see themselves in ability grouping.⁵ The

Maxine Mann is research assistant at State University of Iowa, Iowa City.

children were told that the writer was making a study to find out what children were thinking and that their teacher had said she believed they would be willing to help. They readily agreed. Blank sheets of paper were then distributed. When children asked whether they should write their names on the papers, they were told that it would not be necessary. It was suggested that perhaps it would be easier to write exactly what they thought if they did not. Some children expressed relief while others insisted upon identifying their papers.

The following directions were given with sufficient time between questions for the children to think and write as fully as they wished.

Please write a number One at the top of your paper. After the number One write the grade you are in. Now write a number Two under the number One and tell me *which* fifth grade you are in. Now write a number Three and tell me how you happen to be in *this* particular fifth-grade group rather than some other group. Now put a number Four on your paper and answer this question with just a "yes" or "no." Is your very, very best friend in this room? Now write a number Five on your paper and answer this question with just a number. How many years have you gone to this school?

The first, fourth and fifth questions were blinds to allay any suspicion on the part of the children, while the second and third were designed to obtain the information.

Discussion of Data

Since the groups are officially labeled by teachers' names, one might expect the children to identify them in this manner.

⁴ Arthur W. Combs and Daniel Soper, "The Self, Its Derivative Terms, and Research," *Journal of Individual Psychology*, XII (November, 1957), pp. 137-8.

⁵ Alice V. Keliher, *A Critical Study of Homogeneous Grouping* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1931), p. 109.

About one-third of Section One did make this identification, but almost two-thirds of this group used such terms as "high fifth," "high," "best," "top fifth." Only three children in Section Two and six in Section Three used such identifications as "second highest," "second high,"

"second to the highest," "C room," "third fifth grade." In Section Four, as in Section One, two-thirds of the group used terms such as "low fifth grade," "low," "lower," rather than the teacher's name. Ways in which children identified their groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
WAYS IN WHICH CHILDREN IDENTIFIED THEIR GROUPS

Identification of Group	Section				Total
	1	2	3	4	
By ability placement	19	3	6	12	40
By teacher's name	11	26	17	5	59
By other means	0	0	2	1	3

While only forty of the entire sample identified their groups in terms of ability placement, over two-thirds of Sections One and Four responded in this manner. What experiences have brought about such clear identification in *these* sections? Since they are not with other groups for comparison, could this be a reflection of teacher attitudes which have been ingrained in children?

The reasons these children gave for their placement help to bring their self pictures into even clearer focus. Such responses as "I'm smart," "We're smarter," "I'm too dumb," "We don't know very much," account for half the answers to the third question. The reasons the children gave for their placement are presented in Table 2. (See page 360.)

In Section One twenty-five children gave positive responses in terms of ability or achievement—twenty-one of them in positive "I" terms. There were no negative responses from this group. In the next lower section, Section Two, there

were only seven responses in terms of ability or achievement and in Section Three only five. In Section Four, the lowest, the fourteen responding in terms of ability or achievement gave negative responses—six in "I" terms, seven in "we" terms. It is interesting to note that there are no negative responses in Sections One and Two, few in Section Three, and *only* negative responses in Section Four.

Again one may ask, "What are the experiences which have contributed to the way the children in the 'top' and 'bottom' groups see themselves? Could teacher rejection of the low group and acceptance of the high group help to account for it?" There is administrative recognition of these attitudes in the practice of giving a teacher a high group after she has had a low group for a year.

Before we grasp the straw of ability grouping as the answer to instructional problems brought about by individual differences in academic potentiality, we

need to re-examine what has already been done with ability grouping. Because of the negative attitudes such as those revealed by the "low" group in this study, ability grouping was abandoned in the thirties. Are we going to repeat the same mistakes in the sixties?

Recommended Reading

J. Wayne Wrightstone, *What Research Says to the Teacher About Class Organization for Instruction* (Washington, D. C.: NEA, 1957).

ACEI, *More About Reading* (Washington 16, D. C.: The Association, 3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N. W., 1959).

Table 2

CHILDREN REFLECT "SMARTNESS" AND "DUMBNESS" AS REASONS FOR PLACEMENT

Reasons Given by Children	Section				Total
	1	2	3	4	
1. "I do not know."	...	14	12	...	26
2. "My name was on the list." "They put me here." "I passed."	5	6	6	...	17
3. <i>In positive terms of ability or achievement:</i>					
"I" responses: "I'm smart." "I was good in something."					
"I worked hard." "I made good grades."	21	1	2	...	24
"We" responses: "We're smarter."					
"We all know about the same things."	3	3	...	...	6
"We can work a little faster."	1	...	...	...	1
"This is the best fifth grade."	...	3	...	...	3
"This room works as fast as I can."					
4. <i>In negative terms of ability or achievement:</i>					
"I" responses: "I am too dumb."					
"I am not so smart." "I can't think good." "I was not doing very good last year."	...	...	2	6	8
"We" responses: "We aren't smart."					
"We don't know very much."	...	...	1	7	8
"Most of us are lazy."	...	...	...	1	1
"Low book."					
5. <i>In somewhat neutral terms of ability or achievement:</i>					
"I was in this level for fifth grade."	...	1	...	...	1
"I work the best I can."	...	...	1	...	1
"As well as we work we get in this grade."	...	...	1	...	1
"What kind of grades you made."	...	1	...	...	1
6. Other reasons	...	...	...	4	4
Total	30	29	25	18	102



A mother tells a story to first graders. Children, teachers and parents are always welcome in the school library.

Quality

Through Individualized Instruction

By M. G. BOWDEN and Others

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail?
By pouring waters from the Nile
Upon each glistening scale.¹

The differences among children are so many and so complex that their analysis defies even the most experienced teacher. At first glance this seems an insurmountable obstacle to the application of the principle of individualization. The teacher is understandably bewildered and dismayed at the thought of tailoring practice materials and assignments to intellectual and emotional measurements of each pupil. Among the thirty children in a

room, it is obvious there are never two alike in their needs or abilities. This seems axiomatic. But perhaps it is time to take a second look at the basic axiom of individual differences.

How are individuals different? There are almost any number of variables that might be named as relevant to the educational process. The most convenient point of reference

M. G. Bowden, principal, Casis School, Austin, Texas, and his committee give illustrations of individualizing instruction in Communicative Skills and in Social Studies-Science. Members of the committee: M. K. Hage, Jr., principal, Mathews School; Willie Long and other staff members of Casis School; Zelda Beth Banchette, first-grade teacher, writes the section on Communicative Skills; Virginia Cassner, kindergarten teacher, writes on Social Studies-Science. M. N. Watson, Austin Public Schools, is the photographer.

¹Adapted from *Alice in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll.

is age, that classic common denominator. Older children are known, or at least supposed, to be more competent than younger ones. This fallacy led to the invention of the "mental age" concept, which is only slightly more reliable as a guide to the ability of a pupil in a specific area of skill or understanding. Mental age is a function of actual age and intelligence. But the measurement of intelligence is, in turn, strongly colored by yet a third variable, the vocabulary level, since testing must be implemented largely in verbal terms. These three variables—age, intelligence and verbal ability—are further complicated by still others.

It is plain that the incredibly wide range of qualitative combinations seen even in a single classroom tends to discourage the teacher from any attempt to adapt teaching materials to each child or to choose special materials for each. Almost every teacher finds some effective techniques for individualization. Let us examine practices in individualizing instruction in communicative skills and social studies-science and see if these illustrations can suggest possibilities for meeting individual needs. Examples are from classroom experiences in an elementary school where teachers accept the principles of individualized growth patterns and attempt to do something about them.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION IN COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS

The world is so full of wonderful books, magazines and other materials of communication that today's teachers and children have opportunities never before realized. Science and informational materials, current events, drama, poetry and fiction are written for every reader, from the beginner to the most proficient. Becoming skilled in the communicative arts is a stimulating and challenging experience, indeed, if a wide variety and a sufficient quantity of these materials are made a part of the school's offerings.

A library-centered school is inevitable. Children need opportunities to browse and select, read and share, interpret, il-

lustrate, dramatize, experiment, and to write both formally and creatively. They need careful instruction at the appropriate time in skills of reading, writing and spelling so that they may learn to perform with minimum amount of errors, fumbling and frustration. Seldom should classrooms be orderly arranged groups of children reading from the same books or working on the same assignment. More often classrooms should consist of informal groups reading many different books, doing a variety of things, satisfying many individual needs and interests.

According to His Own Rate of Learning

Systematic teaching has not lost its place in this kind of organization. The teacher's role as planner and recorder is of vital importance. He has an obligation to know that his pupils are gaining the fundamental skills necessary to becoming proficient and are having varied experiences rather than repeating favored activities or reading the same kinds of materials. It is his duty to establish a systematic scheme of progress for each child according to his own rate of learning. As he helps children participate in this type of learning situation, he often seems to be predominantly a guidance and resource person. The casual observer might easily be unaware of the checking, preplanning and record-keeping that are a part of his daily work.

Let us take a tour of an elementary school to see what is happening in teaching and learning the various arts of communicating.

In the cafeteria we find all of the sixth graders assembled, listening and taking notes as a speaker addresses them from the stage. The occasion is one of a

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series of lectures included in a *Symposium on Africa*. The history, geography, government, political situation, music, art and people of the continent of Africa are being examined. Authorities in one or more of these areas have been invited to speak. Maps, movies, pictures, music and souvenirs are used as illustrations. The children have read widely from books, magazines and newspapers in preparation for the study. Discussion and activities enable teachers to help individual children interpret, understand and appreciate the information offered. One of the challenges of our time is to help children listen well and critically. Modern science has created a pace that adds importance to that which we hear on radio and television and to what we read in newspapers and news magazines.

Reading Newspapers with Guidance

The contributions made by newspapers to our world today are being investigated by a class of fifth graders. Every child is engrossed in *The New York Times*. The school gets thirty-five copies of this newspaper each day to share in certain classes. At a planned time every day each class has an opportunity to read the paper and is given guidance in scanning and in reading critically. Significant events and important people and places in the news are discussed. Standards for giving and listening to reports have been established, and each day certain children make reports which are in turn evaluated by their classmates as to news content and method of reporting. Copies of the local daily papers are also available in the library for school-wide use and the librarian has requests from teachers and pupils at all grade levels for their use in classrooms. Several teachers bring their own daily newspapers and weekly news magazines to school for class use. Such publications

as *The Weekly Reader*, *Junior Scholastic* and *Current Events* are also used.

Adventuring in Writing

Creative writing captures our interest as the tour enters a fourth-grade room. An interview with the teacher reveals that she advocates different policies for managing creative and formal writing in her room. When children write reports, letters or assignments, their papers are checked and the children are expected to produce a correct copy. A part of the reinforcement and enrichment activities in the formal spelling program includes words misspelled in this kind of writing. Children share these by reading them orally to one or more children or to the entire room before submitting them to the teacher. Frequently she makes a corrected typewritten copy for the bulletin board or room library. This story is currently being exhibited:

One sunny morning a crab came walking by, and I wondered how he walked because I didn't see his feet. I wondered and I wondered, but I never found out.

This story is in the typewriter:

I once knew a paper daddy, a paper mommy, a paper girl, a paper boy, a paper dog, and a paper cat. They all lived in a paper house on top of a paper hill. And the father worked in a paper mill. They belonged to a girl named Sue. Now Sue loved them very much, but one day the maid—

Wonderment, imagination, adventure—all of these appear in the writings of children when children are given the proper incentive to create. Writing formally and creatively are both important skills in communicative arts.

Browsing and selecting good books to read are important, too. A third-grade teacher had quite a large number of children in the library because they needed help in discovering a wider variety of books to read. She and the librarian

moved among the children, pulling books from the shelves and discussing them briefly. A boy took Marguerite Henry's *Black Gold* from the shelf, nudged a boy next to him, and said, "This is really good. You ought to read it sometime." Another boy exclaimed, "Well, here is *Son of the Stars*. My brother has been telling me I should read it." A large library collection is a powerful influence upon the reading habits of children, but it can be a little overwhelming unless children are given some guidance and also some opportunity to share and help one another. Boys and girls in our world today need experiences in choosing discriminately and wisely the things they are to read.

Dramatization and Puppetry

On the terrace outside a second-grade room, a small group is working out the dramatization of *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel*. One little girl seems to be the manager. Other children offer suggestions, but the manager makes the final decisions. Inside the classroom, a boy is having a glorious time reading Dr. Seuss's *Horton Hatches the Egg* to an appreciative audience of five or six children. Four children are working on the floor making a space map. They refer to several books which have slips of paper in them locating information needed. Scattered about the room are children writing space stories, constructing or drawing designs of space ships and rockets. The communicative skills of these second graders are making a valuable contribution to a study of space. Some children are working on spelling at the chalkboard. One child is writing the names of the planets as an enrichment activity while the other children are practicing the words from the formal spelling list for the week. Five children have just completed reading "Sue's Puppet Show"



"This is really good. You ought to read it sometime," says a third grader.

from *Around Our Village*. The teacher is helping them make plans to produce their own puppet show about the story. Two boys interrupt to get permission to go to the library. One has just completed Ruthven Todd's *Space Cat* and the other wants to check out the book in his name.

Much teacher planning, organizing and checking have gone into all of these activities. Children were able to accomplish these things because teachers made them possible.

Many Independent Activities

In a first grade an atmosphere of friendly acceptance of one another seems to pervade. There is noise, but it is the muffled noise of busy children working together. One child is writing a story on the chalkboard and three others are writing names of other children; some children scattered over the room are reading to themselves. In the library corner one little girl is browsing through some books, and a little boy is laughing as he shows the pictures and tells the story of *Curious George Flies a Kite* to another little boy. Some children are illustrating words that begin with the consonants "h" and "b." A display on a pegboard screen serves as a reference. In the art corner, several children are painting large pictures with tempera paints. Others are doing crayola work. Four of these are drawing pictures for the Movie Box about "A Wiggly, Wiggly Tooth" from *Did You Ever?* These pictures will later be used in conjunction with the tape recorder to make a television show. A bulletin board display and a table exhibit indicate that the social studies-science interest is toys and how they work. One boy is playing with a wind-up car on the exhibit table, another is examining a plastic clock, and another is experimenting with a battery-operated truck. The teacher is seated near a portable chalkboard with a little girl who is reading "The Big Umbrella" from *The New Our New Friends*. Words on the chalkboard show that she has helped the child improve her ability to read new words; names indicate that she has read with twelve children or small groups of children. Soon these children will play some games and go to the library for a story. Once every two weeks a mother who does a magnificent job of telling stories comes to the library to

tell stories to the primary children.

Reading is on an individual basis. This does not mean that every child is reading alone or in a different book. It does mean that children help to select the books they read and that in all probability the teacher will spend a good part of the year reading with children individually. There are no ability groups as such. Children work in groups at different times during the year, but these groups are organized because of children's common interests in reading or because of a common need for some special work in a particular skill. Some factors which seem necessary to the success of the program are a teacher who has a thorough knowledge and keen appreciation of the skills children need in order to be good readers; a large number of textbooks and trade books in the classrooms, exchanged frequently to insure variety and increasing difficulty; a teacher who can help each child set the pace for his progress; a way of keeping records which requires a minimum of time, yet supplies adequate information about each child.

Thus the teachers and children of one school employ the communicative skills to help them meet the demands of our culture and the challenge of our time. Reading, writing, spelling, listening and observing in an atmosphere that invites browsing, perusing, experimenting and creating are supported by a multitude of books and other reading materials in a central library where teachers, children and parents are always welcome.

INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION IN SOCIAL STUDIES-SCIENCE

"See if you can find another way to prove or disprove it." Thus did Miss X challenge the sixth-grade pair whose curiosity had been left unsatisfied by

the class demonstration of centrifugal force.

Miss X is a typical member of the staff who encourages creative and experimental thinking. In the social studies-science program she is constantly alert for opportunities to improve the children's problem-solving ability as well as to bring out other latent capacities. One of her objectives is to search for the ideal balance among individual, small group and total class work. As she evolves her social studies-science program, certain characteristics of the children influence the design.

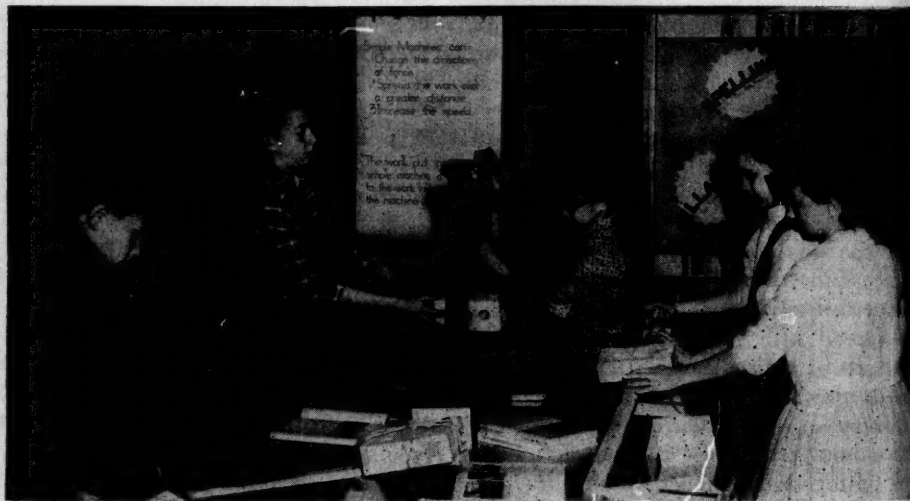
She considers their array of differences, reading scores, and even willingness to learn, which runs the gamut from those who put up barriers against learning to those who are eagerly receptive to new experiences. Parental education varies from high school through post doctoral training. From her study of each of the children, Miss X knows their strengths and weaknesses, social and academic. She has specific objectives for

each child which she discusses with him and his parents in conference.

Instead of a convenient organizational device for the teacher, Miss X regards grouping as a means for the fullest development of an individual in relation to others. Some groups form on the spur of the moment and dissolve when the need disappears. Groups working on long-term projects are capable of different kinds of accomplishments because of the security that comes with familiarity.

Many elements at Casis School facilitate Miss X's efforts to individualize instruction. The administrative policy backs her desire to experiment with ways of meeting individual needs. To assist in directing individuals to appropriate materials, a full-time professional librarian administers a collection of more than 9000 volumes as well as magazines, films, records, maps, pamphlets and a community resources file, all housed in a stimulating library atmosphere. The science center, which includes micro-

Fifth graders experiment with simple machines until they understand the principles.



scopes, models and other materials, is always available when someone's problem demands equipment. In the halls are astronomical maps, time zone maps with appropriate clocks, a weather station and a science display case. Miss X is thankful for parents who have confidence in her and are willing for her to experiment with ways to help individuals learn. Through conferences, Miss X utilizes parent help. She suggests books, materials, trips and enriching home experiences to those who inquire about ways to help their children.

Visits to classrooms demonstrate individualized learning and the group process. As we look in on Mark's third-grade room we see him happily translating a Spanish letter to an admiring group of friends. Mrs. M. tells us this incident has quite a history.

Gaining Confidence

In September Mark was so quiet and retiring that the children hardly noticed him. He was cooperative but never contributed to class discussions, although test results indicated he had higher than average ability. One day, as Jack was telling about his family's plan to move to Puerto Rico, Mrs. M sensed a hint of uncertainty in his announcement. "I just don't know what it will be like there. I won't know anybody." Mrs. M asked Jack if he could think of a way to find out about his future home. Jack's concern about his school, how the people made a living, how they looked and talked aroused the interest of classmates. Mark responded particularly to language differences. The library became the busy scene for extensive reference work on Puerto Rico. Interest in climate led some children into map study. They constructed a large relief map of the country. Some, curious about time differences, used hall maps and clocks to answer their questions. Two children interviewed a Puerto Rican visitor who

shared information about his home with the class. The interviewers told the visitor what they had learned about his country and raised questions that books did not seem to answer. The results of the project were far reaching.

Jack looked forward to moving to his exciting new home with the confidence that grows from knowledge. Before long, Mark and several other children were exchanging letters and gifts with pen pals in Jack's new school. One gift of a musical instrument led a group into the study of music of Puerto Rico. In a conference with Mark and his parents, Mrs. M suggested that Mark might benefit from Spanish lessons the school offered. He responded enthusiastically and became a diligent student. Mark's new-found status as class expert in Spanish gave him the self-confidence he needed so that he now makes fine contributions to his group. His interest in Spanish has continued.

Fourth graders study time zone map to check their understandings.



Problem-Solving

The kindergarten offers another pertinent incident. As we enter, a lively discussion is in progress. "Get out! You can't work in the candy factory until we've got it built!" "It's not a candy factory, it's a candy store!" "Look out, the wall is going to fall!" Four children have been working for nearly twenty minutes to build a factory like the one the class visited yesterday. And now a child, moving "machinery" into the incompleting factory, has knocked down the walls.

Steven turns to complain of the invasion to Mrs. G while David plans more overt protest. When each of the five has told his version of the mishap, the teacher raises pertinent questions. "What can we do to fasten the blocks more securely?" "Do you think the man in the candy factory used his machinery before the factory was built around it?" "Was the candy store in the same building with the factory?" Soon children begin to offer solutions to their problems. "I know, we could have the factory here and the store over there. And I'll have a delivery truck like the one we saw yesterday," exclaims Bryan. Five workers with a common purpose complete the structures in competent fashion.

Mrs. G recognizes several important kinds of group experience in this incident. Problems in group living have arisen and are worked upon by all those involved. Mrs. G is alert to situations in which groups exhibit behavior that is undesirable in our democratic society. Bryan had thwarted group effort by accidentally destroying their structure. When he joined their work cooperatively and shared his ideas with them, everyone had a satisfying experience. David found cooperative problem-solving more effective than angry violence. By pooling ideas,

the group discovered new approaches to their problem which would have remained hidden if artificial teacher-made standards had been enforced. Foundations of democratic processes important to thinking citizens were laid.

The group formed spontaneously because of the children's need to communicate new ideas gained from the trip. Each child is in this group by his own choice; each is working on problems important to him. Mrs. G knows the structure of this group is ideal because it is based on children's own purposes. Self-selection creates groups with mutual goals because only children with common purposes choose to be in the group. Mrs. G considers her role as she observes the dramatic play critically.

She watches for misconceptions that need clarification. The candy-makers omitted a step in the procedure they had observed. Lesa was very vague about measuring her ingredients. Emphasizing exact measurements would help her. Mrs. G observes the need for materials to raise the play to a higher level. A cash register and play money make the candy store more realistic. Measuring spoons and cups are needed, too. Some arithmetic vocabulary and number understanding emerge.

In making candy the children look, listen, taste, smell and touch to find answers to questions that arise. "Where does sugar go when you stir the water?" "Why do you have to cook it?" Some unanswered questions serve as the basis for future individual, small group and total class study. Some unanswered questions remain so until later years.

Individual and Group Activities

Our next visit takes us to a fifth grade engaged in studying the period of discovery and exploration in the Western

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Hemisphere. "Will you help me check my outline of Cortez' explorations, Mrs. B?" we hear Nancy asking eagerly. Before making such a request, Nancy and other members of her class work long and hard, constantly evaluating progress with the help of a personal record sheet. While Mrs. B helps Nancy evaluate her plans for sharing her information with her group, other members of the class are engaged in projects of their own choosing. A group of five is reporting to their chairman on how physical features of America affect the lives of the people. A lively debate arises on the most effective way of presenting their information to the group.

Not all projects are shared with the group. Beth goes to the library with a bibliography sheet, notebook and pencil to do reference work on the cities which grew up around harbors. She feels confident about note-taking because Mrs. B has given her careful guidance in making correct bibliographical entries and phrase note-taking to summarize findings in her own words. Beth will proofread her written material to eliminate spelling, punctuation and grammar weaknesses before asking for Mrs. B's criticism. She recalls her conference with Mrs. B during the fourth week of school. "You are capable of much better work, Beth. Let's try to find out why you are not doing it." Beth's parents joined in the conference. Together they discovered that Beth felt intimidated by some of the more aggressively enthusiastic members of her group. Others made all the plans before Beth could muster enough courage to offer her ideas. After the conference, everyone was more aware of Beth's needs and abilities. Although she continued to work alone on some projects, Mrs. B guided her to less aggressive group-mates who permitted her to play a more active role.

George and Sam are working on a bulletin board with a large black felt outline map of the United States dated 1492. A caption reads, "What Does the Future Hold?" Beneath the map is a legend on which different colors designate Spanish, French, English and Dutch. As Sam checks the legend for the correct color and describes how and when the area changed hands, George fills the territory in with the appropriate color.

Mrs. B believed these two high-ability boys needed an extra challenge. While slower children were working on specific aspects of exploration, George and Paul were given the responsibility of preparing an overview. The results of this special project are twofold: it will enrich the learnings of slower children and the boys will profit by the real contribution they are making to the total picture.

Cindy and five others are on the terrace outside the classroom perfecting a skit about Coronado's exploration. This is the culmination of an extensive period of preparation. First came the planning session; individuals had located information under the guidance of the librarian; each child had consulted at least four sources. In subsequent meetings the group shared information, planned plot incidents, selected characters, made simple costumes, painted scenery and created dialogue. When this project is finished, the need for the group will disappear. As these six turn to new interests, they will re-group with different children or work individually.

These children are operating in a productive study context. Mrs. B has planned with children so that everyone has a balance between oral, written and active work. She has guided each child toward materials and activities consistent with his capacities, toward a situation in which he can succeed. No child must repeat a task he has already mastered. Each finds himself growing through con-

tact with others who share his interest in a problem. Others need and respect his contribution; individual differences are respected and encouraged.

Teamwork

In a fourth-grade room we note three children explaining how they made a relief elevation map of the United States. Darroll, the leader, tells how his team used the opaque projector to enlarge a small map on a large sheet of plywood. With papier-maché they built various levels of elevation in appropriate places. Painting both map and legend was the final step. When we compliment Mr. H on the group's excellent product and Darroll's fine leadership, he reflects on Darroll's progress.

It started one day when Darroll announced his plan to make a diorama illustrating the elevation color code. He worked hard with a shoe box and paints, but neither he nor Mr. H was pleased with the inaccurate, untidy result. Mr. H had noticed how intently John and Bill watched Darroll's efforts. Bill was a fine artist who had shown little enthusiasm for map study—in fact he had shown little enthusiasm for anything except drawing pictures and playing soft ball. John, on the contrary, was quiet, suggestible and serious, with excellent study habits. He followed directions well and handed in neat, accurate work, but only what was required. He never seemed to have ideas of his own.

Mr. H pondered, "Can these three vastly different children unite their talents in a common cause?" He casually suggested, "Perhaps the three of you together can figure out a better way to show different elevations." Darroll organized the group. Pooling resources, the three added idea to idea. Finally plans were made and materials were assembled. After working hard for over a week, the boys produced a relief map of which they were justly proud.

In a second grade five children sit in a corner chipping rust. Miss M explains that they are preparing to test the preserving power of paint. It started the day Chris was listening to a group report on the need for oiling tractors exposed to wet weather to avoid rust. While members of the class continued their individual studies of machines, Chris pondered the meaning of corrosion. Miss M, encouraging originality and independent work, suggested that he try to find materials in the science center to help him learn more about rust. Chris used microscope, oil and various metals with water in glass and metal containers in his experiments. Before his manipulations were through, several classmates contributed toys and other metal objects that had rusted in the rain. Children frequently consulted the wind indicator and weather flag in the hall to find when the weather favored their experiments outside. Thus a whole class project was born from one child's curiosity and the teacher's efforts to motivate his curiosity.

Fulllest Development of an Individual

When a Casis teacher evaluates the group experience he has offered children, his first question is: "What did each individual gain?" Group experiences are regarded as a means for the fullest development of an individual in relation to others rather than as an artificial device convenient for the teacher. Was a child performing below capacity brought to realize his leadership potential in the group? Did an aggressive child learn something of the effectiveness of democratic group processes? Were individuals able to accomplish more by pooling resources or by working separately? Grouping is justified only to the extent that it makes provisions for individual differences and meets individual needs.

Instead of Ability Grouping—What?

Nellie C. Morrison, supervisor of elementary education, Muncie, Indiana, states problems in grouping children and sets up criteria for meeting their individual needs.

VARIOUS COMBINATIONS AND VARIATIONS of grouping have been tried and all fall short of being ideal ways of meeting individual differences in an elementary classroom. Theoretically, we agree with those who criticize ways of grouping. What practical plan of organization should we suggest to teachers which takes into account the fact that today elementary teachers are teaching groups of thirty, thirty-five and even forty in rooms often too small for that number? Perhaps the question, "Instead of ability grouping—what?" should be, "Under present conditions what way is the most practical and effective way to organize an elementary school (or classroom) to take care of individual differences?" Of course, there is no single answer that will apply to all situations under all conditions. Harold Shane, at the 1959 ACEI Conference, is quoted as saying:

As American elementary education stands on the threshold of the 1960's, the matter of grouping children continues to be characterized by: (1) problems of terminology including overlapping terminology and conflicting interpretations of terminology, (2) insufficient comprehensive research data, (3) appreciable differences in both practice and opinion.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the "best" grouping procedures are likely to differ from one school to another, the most desirable practice often being dependent upon such factors as: (1) the competence and maturity of the local staff, (2) the nature of the physical plant, (3) school size, (4) class size, (5) the local curriculum or design of instruction, and (6) a highly intangible quality—the intensity of the desire of a teacher or a group of teachers to make a particular plan work effectively.

The philosophy and ability of the able teacher are undoubtedly more important than any grouping plan, however ingenious it may be, with respect to creating good environments for teaching and learning.

What can we suggest to teachers to take the place of the kinds of ability groupings we see today? The first step would be to set criteria by which to measure newer plans. The following are suggested as suitable criteria:

- Any plan must take into account that teachers must deal with children who differ not only in general ability but in specific abilities. A child may do well in reading and find number work hard. A child may read fluently orally but have difficulty with comprehension.

- We must help the child to understand his own weaknesses and strengths with as

little undermining of the child's self-confidence and esteem or as little building up of self-inflation as possible.

- Our plans for caring for individual differences must be understood and acceptable to the majority of parents.

- Children should learn to live with people of varied abilities and should learn to recognize the fact that most people have strengths and abilities in certain areas.

- Any plan must be practical under present-day conditions—possible for the teacher to work out.

- Any plan must bring results which show that effective teaching is taking place, not only in the so-called fundamentals but also in attitudes, interests and happy living together.

With these criteria in mind, what are some possibilities for classroom organization which we might consider? Most of the following ways of organizing a class have been tried and they have their advantages and disadvantages.

1. Individualized Instruction

Many experiments—particularly in the field of reading—are being reported where the teacher spends his time with individual children who are using self-chosen materials. The advantages are that the teacher can devote a small portion of time to one child; that the child's needs and interests can be served better than in a group. The quiet, retiring child may be drawn out and understood, whereas group teaching would be less likely to overcome his timidity. Individualized teaching presupposes that the teacher is skilled in supplying each child with a variety of reading materials from which to choose and appropriate guidance in the mechanics of reading. It presupposes a small enough number of children so that the teacher can get to each child a reasonable number of times and skill in directing the other children in worthwhile independent activities. It also presupposes that there will be times when children will have the stimulation of working with other children. However, it represents a way of taking care of individual differences which teachers would like to use more than they do.

2. Special Needs Groups

Possibly this is the kind of grouping which should be more widely practiced. This is a temporary, flexible kind of grouping, bringing together those children who need help in a particular skill or group of skills. The advantage is that children's individual needs are met in a manner which is economical in terms of the teacher's time. It requires skill on the part of the teacher in recognizing a need common to a group and the ability to handle a flexible, changing classroom organization. The beginning or unskilled teacher can find himself disorganized and insecure, wasting much time, if he tries too much of this at the beginning.

3. Small Group Work

This is the kind of organization in which a number of small groups are working on the same kind of activity for a period in the day, perhaps with a child chairman for each group. Children may be reading, with a different book being used by each group. It may be arithmetic with each group working on a needed kind of work. The teacher moves from group to group, giving help and direction where it is needed. It takes a skillful teacher to plan with children in such a way that each group uses its time to good advantage. It is amazing that the necessary busy noise bothers the children far less than it does the adults.

4. Interest Groups

In this plan, children with a common interest are brought together regardless of ability, which serves as a motivating force. These interests may be those centered in a certain story, a special piece of research in science or social studies or a kind of construction or manual activity. The advantage is that children join a group because they already have an interest in the activity underway and do not need much motivation. Frequently the drive (or interest) can overcome to a certain degree the lack of skill or ability on a part of the group. However, the differences in ability may cause a problem.

5. Self-Chosen Groups

Some of the above groupings may be of this kind. But the writer has in mind three groups

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for reading or arithmetic but with the difference that children would elect to join a certain group when they are introduced to the kind of material and the activity of each group. For example, at reading time a teacher might briefly describe three books which will be used by the group, explaining a bit about the relative difficulty of the books and the kinds of stories they include. In arithmetic it might mean inviting children to a group if they need help in a certain skill. It is the conviction of the writer that with few exceptions children would tend to join the group best suited to their needs, and the stigma of teacher-labeling would be somewhat minimized. Some adjustments in personnel of groups might need to be made by the teacher; but after a few days of freedom to change, the children would be grouped as the teacher might have done it. This might seem to imply general grouping for a subject without consideration of specific needs. It can be as flexible and as specific in purpose as the teacher chooses, but the advantage lies in the fact that the child chooses the group. This way of organizing groups deserves some experimentation.

Obviously, the above ways of grouping are not mutually exclusive. There have been many variations and combinations tried by many teachers and used by

the same teacher. The disturbing point at present seems to be that just at the point where ability grouping seems to be generally practiced, we are raising justifiable questions about its value and failing to supply busy teachers with practical ideas for improved ways of caring for individual differences. The answer would be far simpler if elementary teachers were working with twenty to twenty-five children. But that is not general. Let us work to reduce class size and at the same time explore all possible ways of organizing a classroom for the most effective development of each child's abilities.

Recommended Reading

J. Wayne Wrightstone, *What Research Says to the Teacher About Class Organization for Instruction* (Washington, D. C.: NEA, 1957).

ACEI, *More About Reading* (Washington 16, D. C.: The Association, 3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N. W., 1959).

Omar C. Mitchell, "Groping with Grouping," *The American School Board Journal*, April 1959.

Albert R. Brinkman, "The Tarrytowns Try Balanced Grouping," *Elementary School Journal*, March 1959.

Gift to ACEI Building Fund

I hereby give to the Building Fund of the Association for Childhood Education International, a corporation organized under the laws of the District of

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APRIL 1960

News HERE and THERE

By ALBERTA L. MEYER

New ACE Branches

Howard College ACE, Birmingham, Ala.
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Childhood Education Center

On February 22 the staff moved into the new headquarters building. Offices are now arranged and new routines established. The staff is grateful for the spaciousness and privacy which the new building affords. Already these improved working conditions are bringing about increased efficiency and pleasure on the job.

At the time of moving the landscaping was partially completed. Planting has gone on throughout the month of March and the graceful lines of trees, bushes and plants have already begun to make the building look well established at its corner location. An interesting variety of plants has been included. Amateur gardeners are invited to examine the plans of the landscape architect on display at the ACEI Center Table during the ACEI Conference or to make a personal inspection when next in Washington.

New stationery bearing two views of the new building will be on sale at the ACEI Center. It comes in an attractive folder of twelve notes for \$1.00, plus ten per cent for mailing. A thoughtful gift, it will also add a bit to the Building Fund.

As soon as ACEI moved into the new Center, the construction loan was converted into a mortgage which requires a \$1,575 monthly payment. Obviously, to reduce the principal it is necessary that we make additional payments as rapidly as possible. Otherwise, the interest in a few years would amount to almost as much as the loan. The Association is encouraged by being continually remembered by many individuals and branches who have given to the Building Fund in the past. Your continued support is needed.

White House Conference

About seven thousand people attended this great meeting held in Washington. Daily reports appeared in newspapers all over the country and, like previous conferences, the effects of this one will stretch out over the years. Those interested in the Conference

Proceedings may order a copy from the Publications Division, White House Conference on Children and Youth, 330 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington 25, D. C. This is scheduled for July publication at \$2.25, plus handling and postage. Background reports written for the Conference will continue to be available from the same source (See March CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, p. 334).

ACE branches and state associations are urged to seek representation on state and local councils which will follow up White House Conference findings. Your cooperation in this important venture is a real opportunity for service to children.

Individuals and groups will find helpful a bibliography, *The Opportunities That Books Offer*, which covers recent literature about children's books that pertains to subject matter of the White House Conference. It is annotated and divided into five sections: Character Development and the Acquisition of Values Through Books; Books Aid the Physically, Mentally, and Emotionally Handicapped; Intergroup Relations; Toward a Life of Creativity; Youth Against the Community. Single copies, twenty-five cents; twenty-five copies, \$2.25. Order from Children's Book Council, Inc., 175 Fifth Ave., New York 10.

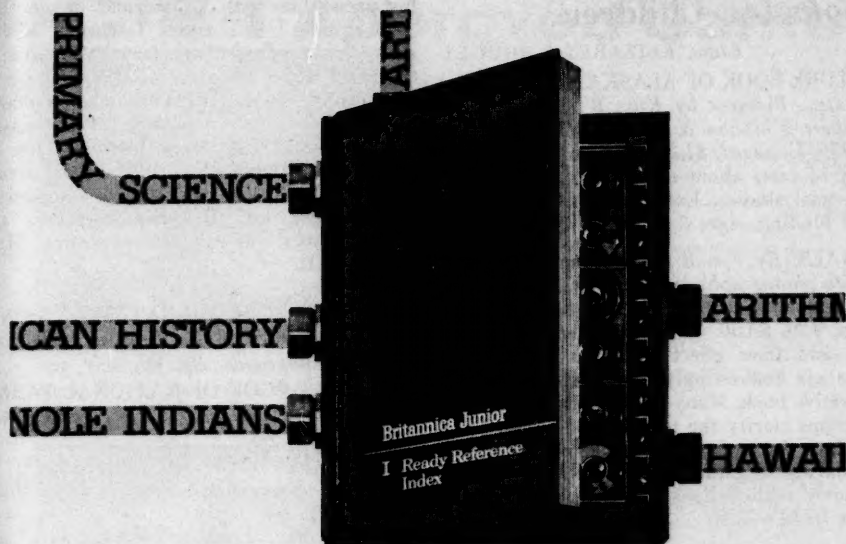
Youth Fitness Week, May 1-7

Sponsored by The President's Council on Youth Fitness, this week has been set aside to call attention to the need for all phases of fitness for the youth of this country. This program's emphasis includes mental and social fitness as well as physical. ACE branches might offer assistance to their respective local youth fitness organizations and suggest that the fitness of children is fundamental to that of young people.

Kindergartens To Return to Seattle

A recent tax election will make it possible for the Seattle Public Schools to reopen their kindergartens next fall. A previous tax election failed because of an economy measure and resulted in closing kindergartens in September 1959. Since four hundred kindergarten teachers went into other positions in the system or left the city, a re-staffing problem remains to be solved.

It is good news indeed that parents and teachers in Seattle demonstrated their belief in the value of kindergartens. Now they will be restored by popular demand.



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Books for Children

Editor, ELIZABETH HODGES

PICTURE BOOK OF ALASKA. By Bernadine Bailey. Pictures by Kurt Wiese. Chicago: Albert Whitman & Co., 560 W. Lake St., 1959. Unpaged. \$1.25. An inexpensive summary of facts about our largest state, useful for social studies. Excellent illustrations and good binding. Ages 7-10.—E.H.

CANALS. By Fon W. Boardman. Illustrated with photographs and diagrams. New York: Henry Z. Walck, Inc., 101 5th Ave., 1959. Pp. 139. \$3.50. Canals—ancient and modern—and their effect on areas which they serve are interestingly described in this informative book. Many photographs, maps and diagrams clarify the text and make the book inviting. An index is useful for reference. Similar in organization and format to the author's earlier books, *Roads and Castles*. Ages 10-14.—E.H.

THE FAR FRONTIER. By William O. Steele. Illustrated by Paul Galdone. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 750 3d Ave., 1959. Pp. 185. \$2.95. The author of many fine adventure stories for boys here gives us a

fast-paced tale with an unusual theme. The "far frontier" is not the Tennessee wilderness (the story's setting) but the frontier of the mind where learning prevails over ignorance. Young Tobias, apprenticed to an elderly naturalist, has only contempt for his master until he finds that "book learning" has its value even in Indian country. On their journey through the forest the two strange companions face danger and hardship together, and Tobias learns the value of education. Ages 10-14.—E.H.

THE FIRST BOOK OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS. By Norman Lobsenz. Illustrated with photographs. Pp. 90.

THE FIRST BOOK OF NATIONAL PARKS. By Norman Lobsenz. Illustrated with photographs. Pp. 88.

THE FIRST BOOK OF PIONEERS. By Walter Havighurst. Pictures by Harve Stein. Pp. 69.

New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 575 Lexington Ave., 1959. \$1.95 each. These three new titles in a useful series follow the familiar pattern of the "first" books. Each is a readable introduction to an interesting subject, adequately illustrated, indexed



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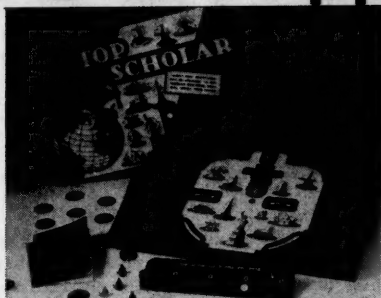
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and sturdily bound. Recommended for readers of 9-12 needing brief facts attractively presented.—E.H.

THE GAMMAGE CUP. By Carol Kendall. Illustrated by Erik Blegvad. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 750 3rd Ave., 1959. Pp. 221. \$3.25. This highly original fantasy concerns a colony of people called the Minnips. Their history records that they fled to their present secure valley when attacked by their traditional enemies, the Mushrooms. Through peaceful years the complacency of the community grows, fostered by the public officials, the Periods. Five individuals who dare to challenge the edicts of the Periods are ostracized but prove to be the saviors of the village when the Mushrooms again attack. A happy flight of the imagination recommended for the perceptive reader of 9-12.—E.H.

GRASSLANDS. By Delia Goetz. Illustrated by Louis Darling. New York: William Morrow & Co., 425 4th Ave., 1959. Pp. 64. \$2.75. The fourth in Delia Goetz's books about geographical regions (*Deserts*, *Tropical Rain Forests* and *The Arctic Tundra* are the three earlier titles), this book describes the

regions which produce the world's most important plants. Prairies, steppes and savannas are discussed—their plant and animal life, the changes which man has brought to them, and what life in each area is like. Large print, smooth style, beautiful illustrations. Ages 9-12.—E.H.

THE LITTLE HORSE THAT RACED THE TRAIN. By Wilma Pitchford Hays. Illustrated by Wesley Dennis. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 34 Beacon St., 1959. Pp. 31. \$2.75. An appealing story for older boys and girls with limited reading ability, this tells of a little horse left by mistake to spend the winter in a mountain pasture. She is discovered by Elmer, who rides to school on the train which carries workers to a construction camp. Each day the little horse races the train to the top of the hill, until the day of the first snowstorm. Then, marooned on the mountainside, she becomes the object of an exciting rescue. Based on a true story. Ages 6-10.—E.H.

PATTY ON HORSEBACK. Written and illustrated by Emma L. Brock. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 501 Madison Ave.,



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THE REAL BOOK ABOUT OUR NATIONAL CAPITAL. By E. John Long. Illustrated with photographs. Garden City, N. Y.: Garden City Books, 1959. Pp. 222. \$1.95. This up-to-the-minute guide to Washington combines history and background with current information. It covers the usual landmarks and also has chapters on the environs of Washington, the social whirl and problems present and future. Photographs and an index complete a well-planned book. Ages 8-14.—E.H.

THE REASON FOR THE PELICAN. By John Ciardi. Illustrated by Madeleine Gekiere. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.,

227-231 S. 6th St., 1959. Pp. 63. \$3. These delightful nonsense rhymes by a recognized poet are excellent for reading aloud. Believing that tongue-twisting words and fine phrases are pleasing to children as well as adults, the author has given free range to vocabulary and fancy. The subjects are child-like, the treatment fresh, witty and original. Ages 5-10.—E.H.

TALES TOLD AGAIN. By Walter de la Mare. Illustrated by Alan Howard. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 501 Madison Ave., 1959. Pp. 207. \$3. This attractive new edition of a book originally titled *Told Again* contains excellent versions of nineteen favorite stories. "Dick Whittington," "Snow-White," "Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella," and "Jack and the Beanstalk" are included. Outstanding for its lively and graceful literary style. Ages 8-12.—E.H.

WHITEFOOT MOUSE. By Barbara and Russell Peterson. Illustrated by Russell Peterson. New York: Holiday House, 8 W. 13th St., 1959. Pp. 53. \$2.50. Cold, hunger and other animals never cease to menace the whitefoot mouse during winter. Yet not only

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LET'S GO FOR A NATURE WALK. By Joan Rosner. Illustrated by Betty Harrington. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 210 Madison Ave., 1959. Pp. 47. \$1.95. The story leads you on an imagined nature walk and guides your observation along the way. You learn how to identify common trees, weeds and flowers, rocks, insects and birds. A glossary helps the reader with new and difficult terms. Ages 7-11.—P.E.B.

WHO LIVES IN A FIELD? By Duryea Morton. Illustrated by Douglas Howland. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 210 Madison Ave., 1959. Pp. 127. \$3. An appealing description of small and not-so-small animals that live in the fields and woods about us. It tells how rabbits and field mice, foxes and chipmunks build their nests, find their food, raise their families and fight for survival against larger or more aggressive animals that prowl the woods and fields. Many full-page illustrations are included. Ages 7-11.—P.E.B.

SOUND AND ULTRASONICS. By Robert Irving. Illustrated by Leonard Everett Fisher. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 501 Madison Ave., 1959. Pp. 146. \$2.75. This attractively printed and illustrated book gives a clear explanation of the nature of sound. It discusses many types of sound makers: vibrating strings, organ pipes and other air columns. It tells how the different animals sound—from crickets to shrimps. Ultrasonics are explored as "sounds we cannot hear." Ages 10-12.—P.E.B.

WILD FOLK AT THE SEASHORE. Written and illustrated by Carroll Lane Fenton. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 210 Madison Ave., 1959. Pp. 128. \$3.50. This descriptive narrative provides much information on sea animals and plants of the East and West coasts: their appearance, their habits, their diets and even their enemies. A colorful contribution to an area teeming with life and vitality. Ages 4-14.—P.E.B.

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Books for Adults

Editor, JAMES A. SMITH

CREATIVE POWER: THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH IN THE CREATIVE ARTS (2d Rev. Ed.). By *Hughes Mearns*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick St. Pp. 272. \$1.50. We had to let you know it was in print again! With a few new chapters added, the dynamic book which released the creative power of a nation in 1929 has been brought up to date. It seems more timely and more dramatically important than ever before. Even if you have read it, read it again. In the era of the launching of Sputnik and the criticism which it has brought on the schools, *Creative Power* may help us find true avenues to solution of our problems. In the pages of this fine piece of literature may well lie the key as to how we develop great scientists, authors and poets.—J.A.S.

EDUCATION THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES (3d Ed.). By *Patric Ruth O'Keefe* and *Anita Aldrich*. St. Louis: The C. V. Mosby Co., 3207 Washington Blvd.,

1959. Pp. 377. \$4.50. Based on the premise that fitness is basic to a life of service and happiness, this book provides comprehensive materials, suggests teaching procedures and techniques, and presents ways of evaluating a sound program in physical education and recreation. First it explains the objectives of a good physical education and recreation program; the organization, equipment and safety precautions necessary to put such a program into effect and the basis for selection and evaluation of activities.

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One part has sample tests which add little to the rest of the text.

This book can serve as an aid to the classroom teacher or the specialist or as a text for college students. It is a good resource book. However, it does not deal with the



BOOKS

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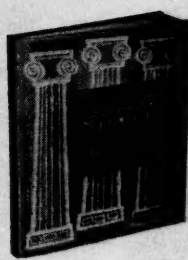
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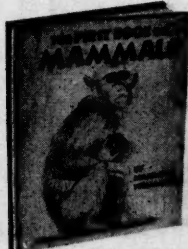
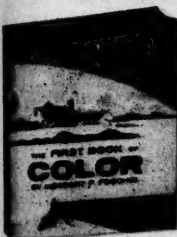
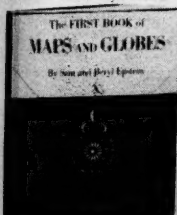
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aspects of a good physical education program integrated with the total school program. Nor is any space given to the creative aspects of a good recreational curriculum.—J.A.S.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD IN READING, WRITING AND ARITHMETIC. By

Freida E. Van Atta. New York: Random House, 457 Madison Ave., 1959. Pp. 374.

\$4.95. Written in response to the many requests made by parents for a guide to help their children with school, this book attempts to explain and review the place of the 3 R's in the school curriculum. Each grade level is allotted an average space of about 35 pages. For each, the author discusses the reading program, gives references for parents to explore, explains the writing program and develops the arithmetic program. She then devotes many pages to exercises of the workbook variety for children to work at home.

Although the author's sincerity cannot be challenged, the result of her work raises many questions in one's mind. Does a book of this kind really help parents, or does it serve to confuse them more? Removed from

the full school day where social living, physical activity and creative arts play such a necessary and important part to the child, the 3 R's seem rather void of meaning. Only occasionally does the author attempt to put meaning to the methodology she supports—she tells parents "how" but rarely "why."

In many ways, this is a dangerous book. It is so over-simplified that none of the skill or art of teaching ever really comes through. The impression remains that "if this is all there is to it why so much fuss about teaching—anyone can do it." And, although Mrs. Van Atta warns that "this book is not to be used as a check against a teacher or her teaching methods," the result is implicit in the suggestion.

Many resourceful teachers are going to suffer from the comparison which will be made between them and the unimaginative, stereotype methods and materials presented in the book.

Many statements will cause educators to cringe; i.e., "In the third grade your child first reviews everything he has learned about numbers in the beginning grades. Then he

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starts to understand the meaning of numbers." "... Grammar as such is not taught in the fourth grade." Who says so? The book is full of such misleading ideas.

Unnecessarily padded in many places with the obvious, the book gives parents and children busy work to do together with little direction or purpose. It is overly authoritative, presumes all schools are alike, and makes no allowances for individual differences. To a very few parents and children it will perhaps do the job it sets out to do, but for most it will give little direction or understanding to the place of the 3 R's in a modern school curriculum.—J.A.S.

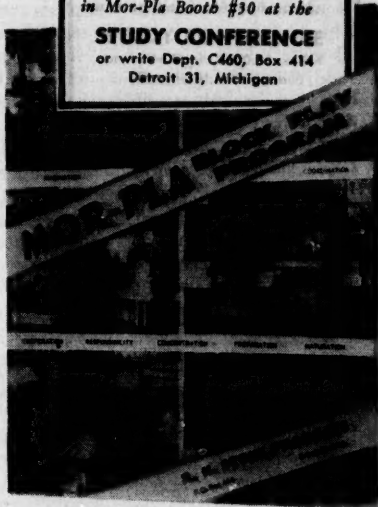
EFFECTIVE SCHOOL HEALTH EDUCATION. By Arthur L. Harnett and John H. Shaw. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 35 W. 32d St., 1959. Pp. 421. \$4.75. This systematic survey of education for health as it should be conducted in elementary and secondary schools is divided into three sections: the health needs of children and

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APRIL 1960

387

the historical and philosophical backgrounds of health education in our country, the total school health program, and the methodology of teaching health. From the teacher's point of view this last section would be of greatest use and interest. Several chapters contain valuable information on the use of audiovisual materials and resources, lists of names and addresses of organizations and publishers from which health teaching materials are available, and excellent suggestions on how the school health program can be evaluated at all levels of operation. The appendices consist of copies of health resource units, examples of record forms, and brief descriptions of diseases commonly encountered by the classroom teacher.—Reviewed by WILLIAM BENJAMIN, Assistant Professor of Education, Syracuse University, N. Y.

EDUCATING THE GIFTED. By Joseph L. French. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 383 Madison Ave., 1959. Pp. 555. \$7.50. With in prescribed limits, the author has done a commendable job in compiling some dis-

criminating material in a book of readings on the gifted child. The intent that this book be used as a text in a one-semester course is plausible; but philosophical aspects, facets in initiating a program, and creativity, which are omitted, should be considered as important additional areas in a course sequence. As a resource book, it does provide important references. Its greatest lack is the omission of a comprehensive bibliography.—Reviewed by LOUIS A. FLIEGLER, Associate Professor of Special Education, Syracuse University, N. Y.

HEALTH EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. By Helen Norman Smith and Mary E. Wolverton. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 15 E. 26th St., 1959. Pp. 315. \$4.50. Written for college students preparing to teach in the first six grades, this is essentially a revised edition of an earlier text, *Health Education in Elementary Schools*, by Helen Coops, and is dedicated to her memory. Included are three round-robin letters, supposedly written by teachers, which describe concepts learned in a summer health education course and explain how each put to work the theory, methods and materials learned. These are followed by a brief historical development of school health education and its organization, a discussion of school health instruction and activities, and the planning of units.

Eighteen sample teaching units for grades one through six are also included. Of special interest are dental health units for grades one, three and five and nutrition units for grades two, four and six. These are planned to help the inexperienced teacher understand the progressive presentation of subject matter at different grade levels.

The authors emphasize the necessity of teaching children in such a manner that, as adults, they will apply to everyday problems of living the principles and understandings learned in health education.

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Written in simple, non-technical language, this is admirably suited to the group for which it is intended.—Reviewed by JOHN H. SHAW, *Professor of Health and Physical Education, Syracuse University, N. Y.*

KINDERGARTEN: YOUR CHILD'S BIG STEP. By Minnie Perrin Berson. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 300 4th Ave., 1959. Pp. 125. \$3.50. In the preface Clark E. Moustakas reviews this book in one sentence: "This book is not about kindergarten education but rather is a fascinating presentation of the meaning of the child's first educational venture."

Minnie Berson writes with a sensitiveness that lifts this book out of the realm of a text. She deals directly and creatively with such topics as the five-year-old's break from the home; the value of the kindergarten curriculum; the impact of space, equipment and materials on the child; and the interplay of people in the life of the five-year-old.

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what she is writing about. What is more, she knows children and parents. As Clark Moustakas further points out, "It (the book) contains not only facts and knowledge of the world of kindergarten, but also the real experiences of a gifted woman whose blend of personal warmth and professional wisdom points to a new way for child and parent, and teacher and parent to meet."

Illustrated with pictures as warm and sensitive as the text itself, this book will dispel any doubts about the worth of a good kindergarten program.—J.A.S.

JOHN DEWEY: DICTIONARY OF EDUCATION. By Ralph B. Winn (Editor). New York: Philosophical Library, 15 E. 40th St., 1959. Pp. 150. \$3.75. As the title suggests, this is a compilation of the basic and casual theories on education of the greatest philosopher of our time. Lifted from many of his best works and arranged by topic in alphabetical form, Dewey's provocative thoughts range from such subjects as "Friendship," "Money" and "Youth" to "Freedom," "Ideals" and "Liberalism."

Dewey emerges from this culling as a bril-

liant writer of clear-cut, provocative and pithy sayings.

"Words," Dewey states, "the counters for ideas, are easily taken for ideas." "Creative activity," he says, "is our great need; but criticism, self-criticism, is the road to its release." About action he says, "Action is the heart of ideas."

These quotes give the reader an idea as to what is in store for him in this fine little piece of philosophical literature.—J.A.S.

THE PREADOLESCENT: THREE MAJOR CONCERNS. By Mary Jane Loomis. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 35 W. 32d St., 1959. Pp. 310. \$4. So often in psychological literature the period just prior to adolescence is treated as merely the last part of childhood, the top end of the latent period. Teachers and knowledgeable laymen consequently fail to see the rumblings of adolescence in the sixth grader or misinterpret some of his reachings for adolescence as too early maturity.

More recently there has been greater recognition of a period of preadolescence in the developmental sequence. *The Preadolescent* makes some notable contributions to this concept. Organized around three major developmental needs (Independence, Sexual Identification, Looking Ahead to Adolescent Living), this short book provides a theoretical rationale for a better understanding of this age group. It does this in a nice amalgam of theory, description of school practice and fascinating anecdotal material on children. The reviewer is tempted to reproduce the anecdotal descriptions which give a delightfully realistic flavor to the book.

The school practices described are more creative than those found in a typical elementary school. Partly as a result of this, one is tempted to believe that the children described are more advanced intellectually than the typical sixth grader. Similarly, parent participation in the school program is more extensive than usual, raising the question of the social class level of the children described. As a model, therefore, the book should be used with caution. But as a sound description of the preadolescent it brings together eminently usable ideas for interpretation and teaching.—Reviewed by THOMAS E. CLAYTON, Associate Professor of Education, Syracuse University, N. Y.



Among the Magazines

Editor, LUCILE LINDBERG

THE REAL FRAUD. By Norman Cousins.

"Saturday Review" (Nov. 21, 1959), p. 27. "The TV screen has become an arena in the home for cheapening human life and an exercise in human desensitization." This writer feels that there are good things on TV and that the good things are getting better. But he is equally convinced that the bad things are getting worse and increasing in number. He says that while American television would appear to deal primarily in entertainment, actually it deals mainly in exploitation of crime and glamorization of violence. TV operators make all sorts of claims about the power of their medium to sell goods, yet they see no cause-and-effect relationship between what they show on the screen and the increasing addiction of young people to cheap violence.

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pend. Along with this goes the need to help a child know how to establish and maintain healthy relationships with other people. The principal effect of television is to cancel out this kind of education and indeed to reverse it."

PEOPLE AREN'T BORN PREJUDICED. *By Ian Stevenson, "Parents' Magazine" (Feb. 1960).* The Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia says that prejudiced thinking is rarely confined to any one subject. "A prejudiced person makes faulty generalizations by applying to a whole group what he has learned from one or a few of its members. Then he behaves toward a whole group as if there were no individual differences among its members. Few people would throw out a whole box of strawberries because they found one or two bad berries at the top—yet this is the way prejudiced people think and act."

"Studies of school children have shown that prejudice is slight or absent among children in the first and second grades. It in-

creases thereafter, building to a peak usually among children in the fourth and fifth grades."

"Studies of markedly prejudiced persons show that they usually come from families in which they were treated harshly, authoritatively and unfairly—in other words, they were themselves the objects of prejudice. If parents treat a child harshly and punish him unfairly they are relating to the child in terms of power instead of love. Treated as if he were always bad, the child will respond to his parents as if they were always dangerous. Growing skilled in the quick detection of threats or possible injury, he becomes sensitive to danger not only from parents but from other people as well. He makes quick judgments in order not to be caught unaware. Quick judgments are a facet of prejudiced thinking. An insecure and easily frightened person makes sweeping judgments about whole groups, finding it safer to treat the whole group as if it might be harmful to him."

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND THE PART-TIME MOTHER. By John A. Rose. "Children" (Nov.-Dec. 1959), pp. 213-18. Research findings and clinical experience both indicate that there is no simple cause-effect relationship between the two factors of maternal employment and developmental damage. In some instances more damage might occur to the child if the mother were not employed.

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career, these tensions are communicated to the children. The decision about whether or not a mother needs to work outside the home should not be made on a purely economic basis. "When a mother's need for satisfaction transcends in nature or quantity the emotional return that can generally be expected from child rearing, distortion in the child's development provides a cue to the mother to seek appropriately what she needs."

NO DESK FOR CARMEN. By Donald R. Thomas and Ralph K. Stueber. "Teachers

College Record" (Dec. 1959), pp. 143-50. Each spring thousands of migrants enter the migrant labor stream and with them go thousands of school-age children. Because migrants are typically housed in isolated areas and are, as a group, generally unobtrusive, they remain outside the conscious activities of the community. By the time their problems are discovered and well-meaning committees are organized, with the necessary election of officers and a program chairman, the migrants may have dispersed.

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THE GROUP PROCESS CONCEPT. By James M. Laing and Paul F. Munger. "Education" (Dec. 1959), pp. 231-34. "One might liken group process to a number of jungle natives seated cross-legged around the bare framework of a canoe. One holds out a piece of bark covering, and, if it seems to be sound, it is allowed to become a part of the boat. When a member of the group offers a piece which is of inferior quality it is rejected. As the pieces of bark are accepted and fitted into place around the frame, the boat takes shape. Finally, when the last piece is in place the project is truly group constructed. The quality is superior to a boat constructed by an individual because each part has had to withstand the test of group analysis."

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Over the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers:

We are constantly being alerted to educational television—its value or lack of value in learning. Experiments have been going on over the country for a number of years. Some of the experiments are forging on with great confidence in their contribution to children's learning; other experiments have shifted their emphases in purposes; still other experiments have terminated for one reason or another.

The following is quoted from *The Washington Post-Times Herald* (January 30, 1960) under the headline, "District Schools Will Drop TV Classes in 1961."

"Washington [D.C.] school officials announced . . . that they want no part of televised science and [foreign] language courses planned for the area next year, and challenged the high hopes held out for Classroom TV as an aid to teaching.

" . . . Superintendent Carl F. Hansen said the schools will not participate in the third year of 'Time for Science' lessons or in the planned foreign language course for elementary pupils.

"Experience with TV courses has convinced the District schools that the lessons conflict with the established curriculum and disrupt the organized sequence of instruction.

" . . . Hansen described himself as 'a person who was fully enthusiastic at first about classroom television.' In 1953, he supported a TV teaching experiment against the opposition of much of the school administration.

" . . . But Hansen said . . . that he is now convinced that effective teaching must be in accord with the school system's planned curriculum and must take into account the individual pupils in the class.

" . . . Science education in the District schools follows an orderly sequence from kindergarten through the 12th grade, Hansen said, and the televised course just doesn't fit in.

"He suggested that it would 'probably be more useful' to offer TV programs dealing with recent scientific advances and current events in science."

At approximately the same time we read in *The News Letter* (December 1959, Vol. XXV,

No. 3, Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, Columbus): "Dewey is . . . deeply concerned about the importance of first-hand experience.

"In *School and Society* he speaks unfavorably about classrooms set up for listening with little provision for active exploration. He is deeply concerned with learning by doing but points out that it should be accompanied by thinking. He criticizes the 'scholastic conception of knowledge which . . . fails to recognize that primary or initial subject matter always exists as matter of an active doing, involving the use of the body and the handling of material. . . .' He notes that 'only in education, never in the life of the farmer, sailor, merchant, physician, or laboratory experimenter, does knowledge mean primarily a store of information aloof from doing.' Educational activities for John Dewey are things which 'grow naturally out of some question with which the student is concerned . . . fit into his more direct acquaintance so as to increase its efficacy and deepen its meaning'."

I cite these two quotations for your consideration before presenting the statements on educational television and learning prepared by ACEI for the White House Conference. They seem to be in accord with the beliefs of the Association in relation to learning and educational television. These statements are:

1. Educators need to develop a more functional and meaningful program rather than to depend upon educational television to relieve teachers of that obligation.

2. Educators' task is to meet more realistically the needs of each child and each classroom rather than merely expose them arbitrarily to predetermined bodies of information to be mastered by all, at the same time.

3. Learning is most successful when there is the wholeness concept rather than that of fragmentation.

4. Even though the latest developments in educational research relating to child growth and development and the psychology of learning are available to all educators, a serious

difference often exists between verbalization of these concepts and interpretation into classroom practice. Educational television programs could become part of an on-going classroom experience and be scheduled with variety and repetition of programs to meet classroom needs.

5. Children should not be forced to conform to the requirements of educational television programs. Any educational program should move cautiously—exploring, experimenting, evaluating, modifying and adjusting to meet needs of individual learners.

6. Those educators who set the pace “to cover the ground” of subject matter in any educational program cannot possibly allow for depth learning.

7. Teaching for depth learning can better be achieved through a variety of media—that is, study prints, radio, films, filmstrips;

through many and varied first-hand experiences and through expression in the arts, crafts, music, the spoken and the written word. These media and experiences must be carefully selected and used in terms of purposes. This kind of teaching allows for the natural rhythm of *intake* of ideas and *outgo* of expression which facilitates learning. Not every child will respond to the same material, same experience nor will every child express himself in the same ways.

We look forward to seeing you in Cleveland at ACEI's Annual Conference the week of April 17.

Sincerely,

Margaret Rasmussen

NEXT MONTH

May: *Creativity Today*

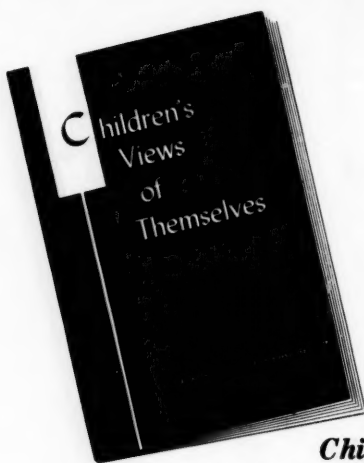
Edgar Dale, The Ohio State University, gives a place to creativity and its meaning in “The Image of Man Tomorrow,” the editorial.

“Emergence of Creative Personality” is written by Ruth Carlson, Alameda State College, Hayward, California. She suggests some of the ways in which a more creative child personality might be developed.

Classroom examples which show critical thinking in a first grade are given by Josephine Shotka, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

In “A Library—Pivot for a Community,” H. A. Tollefson, former assistant director of the Louisville Free Public Library, gives a heartening account of the services for children.

“Please Explore Here!” The place is the Museum of Science and Natural History, St. Louis, and the director of this program for children (and adults) is Murl Deusing. He is also the writer of the article for the May issue—and what a timely note on which to leave you as vacation approaches!



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